

2007

HUNTING

UPDATE



STATE SENATOR 34th District

Gerald Van Woerkom

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

DISTRICT PHONE:
(231) 722.6590

TOLL-FREE: (866) 305.2134

FAX: (517) 373.3300

E-MAIL: sengvanwoerkom@senate.michigan.gov

WEBSITE: www.SenatorJerryVanWoerkom.com

Dear Friend,

As fall approaches, it's time to plan for one of our state's most time-honored traditions – hunting. Whether you hunt deer, turkey, small game or waterfowl, Michigan boasts some of the best hunting opportunities available.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to participate in an event that focused on Michigan's cherished hunting and fishing rights, the first annual Michigan Conservation Week. This special celebration, sponsored by Senate Republicans, featured many activities which recognized Michigan's hunting and fishing heritage and the important role outdoor sportsmen and women have in conserving the natural resources of our state.

Please take a moment to read about legislation promoted during this event, along with hunting safety tips and information on a new environmental threat. As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions on ways to preserve our hunting heritage.

I hope you and your family enjoy Michigan's fall splendor. Best wishes for a safe and successful hunting season!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jerry Van Woerkom".

Gerald Van Woerkom
State Senator
34th District

"Whether you hunt deer, turkey, small game or waterfowl, Michigan boasts some of the best hunting opportunities available."

Senator Gerald Van Woerkom



HUNTERS CAN HELP STOP THE SPREAD OF VHS

Waterfowl hunters and others who hunt from watercraft should take protective action to help control the spread of a new contagious fish disease, Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS). This virus often causes fatal hemorrhaging in fish, including trout, salmon, and other important species. Since 2005, VHS has caused large fish kills in Lakes St. Clair, Erie, Ontario, and Huron, and moved inland as well. Wisconsin authorities recently reported its presence in Lake Michigan.

Anglers and hunters using a boat can help prevent further spread of VHS, and other aquatic nuisance species by taking these precautions:

- Thoroughly clean boats, trailers, and other equipment with a light bleach solution.
- After cleaning, allow boats and equipment to dry in the sun for 4 to 6 hours.
- Empty live wells and bilges when leaving the water to avoid transferring any of that water elsewhere.

While the virus does not affect humans in any way, VHS threatens Michigan's aquatic ecology, and \$4.5 billion recreational and commercial fishery. With stakes this high, it's important that hunters, anglers and all outdoor sportsmen work together to help slow the spread of this disease.



VAN WOERKOM SUPPORTS DNR GIFT CARDS

Looking for the perfect gift for your favorite outdoorsman or woman? New Senate legislation may have the answer for you!

Senate Bill 338 would require the Department of Natural Resources to offer gift certificates redeemable for:

- Hunting and fishing license fees.
- State park motor vehicle permit and camping fees.
- Mooring fees.
- Off-road vehicle license fees.
- Snowmobile license fees.

What a great way to share outdoor Michigan with family and friends – in any season. The legislation has passed the Senate and awaits action in the House. You can track the bill at www.legislature.mi.gov.

VAN WOERKOM OFFERS HUNTING SAFETY TIPS

Hunting incidents in 2006 were up significantly from the previous year. Three of the four fatalities and many of the 31 non-fatal injuries were due to the careless handling of a firearm — and were entirely preventable. Before you head outdoors, remember to hunt with safety in mind, and follow these basic gun safety rules:

- Always have complete control of your firearm.
- Always treat your firearm as if it was loaded.
- Before firing, know your target and what is beyond.
- Be sure the gun is safe to operate and use only the correct ammunition.
- Always unload your firearm before putting it in your vehicle or camp.
- And, NEVER mix hunting and alcohol.

Hunting is a safe outdoor sport, but that doesn't happen by accident.

VAN WOERKOM SUPPORTS RIGHT TO HUNT

Michigan's outdoor heritage is second to none. Yet, in light of a decline in hunting and fishing, and efforts to limit hunting here and across the country, it's important to make sure the right to hunt and fish is protected. Senate Bills 440 through 443 would clearly affirm in law the people's right to hunt, trap, and fish lawfully in Michigan.

Generations of outdoor sportsmen and women have enjoyed these recreational pursuits, learning respect for nature and an enduring love of the land.

Hunters and anglers also provide a substantial contribution to our state and local economies. It is critical that these outdoor activities be protected and promoted into the future.

The bills have passed the Senate and await action in the House.

DEER HUNTING UPDATE

A LOOK AT LAST YEAR

Deer hunters had a good year in 2006! According to a recent report by the Department of Natural Resources, an estimated 671,000 hunters spent 10 million days in the field. Those hunters harvested 456,000 deer, an increase of nearly 9 percent from the number taken in 2005. Statewide, 46 percent of hunters harvested a deer. Hunter numbers increased 3 percent during the regular firearm season and a whopping 56 percent during the youth season.

Check out these statistics and more in the 2006 Deer Harvest Survey Report. Access it at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

(Click on Hunting on the left sidebar, then White-Tailed Deer in the Game Species box).



A LOOK AT THE 2007 SEASON

- **YOUTH FIREARM SEASON:** 2-day hunt starting fourth Saturday in September (Sept. 22-23, 2007)
- **ARCHERY SEASON:** October 1 - November 14 & December 1 - January 1
- **REGULAR FIREARM SEASON:** November 15-30
- **LATE FIREARM SEASON: (antlerless deer on private land only; check www.michigan.gov/dnr for restrictions).** Starts the Monday following third Saturday in December - January 1 (Dec. 18, 2007 - Jan. 1, 2008)
- **MUZZLELOADING SEASON:**
 - Zone 1 (Upper Peninsula):** 10 days starting first Friday in December (Dec. 7-16, 2007)
 - Zone 2 (Northern Lower Peninsula):** 10 days starting second Friday in December (Dec. 14-23, 2007)
 - Zone 3 (Southern Lower Peninsula):** 17 days starting first Friday in December (Dec. 7-23, 2007)

VAN WOERKOM SUPPORTS SPECIAL DEER HUNTING SEASON FOR DISABLED VETS

A pilot hunting season for disabled veterans attracted participants from the Grand Rapids and Marquette Home for Veterans. It was held in conjunction with the youth firearm deer season this past September and conducted in Mason, Oceana and Marquette counties.

I was proud to sponsor Senate Bill 633, now Public Act 60 of 2007, to help the veterans participate in outdoor activities, like hunting, that they may have enjoyed

previously but need special assistance to continue. Those who have become permanently disabled while protecting our country have made an incredible sacrifice. This event helped thank them for their service.

The Natural Resources Commission will evaluate the pilot hunting season to determine if the season can be continued or expanded in other counties across the state next year.

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Senate Bill Would Set Up Hunting Map

Looking for a new place to hunt? Legislation I supported that passed the Senate earlier this year makes the search easier and more comprehensive. Senate Bill 473 would require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a website that would allow a person to locate online federal, state or private lands open to hunting in Michigan.

According to the DNR, 26 percent of the state is open to hunting, and hunters are never more than 20 minutes from a public hunting opportunity. The website would be a simple way to increase visibility of Michigan's hunting resources, make it easier for hunters to plan trips and boost hunting license sales.

The bill awaits action in the House.

RESOURCE GUIDE

Find rules and regulations, access the fall hunting guides, get your license online, and more at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

DNR Telephone Numbers:

Wildlife Division517-373-1263
Fisheries517-373-1280
Parks and Recreation.....517-373-9900
Forest Management.....517-373-1275
Law Enforcement.....517-373-1230
Report All Poaching.....1-800-292-7800

For Further Information:

Chronic Wasting Disease,
Bovine TB517-336-5030

www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases